thom can't sleep

Neurodivergent, 22, He/Him | Mental Health, Wellness or what I feel like. | @thominospizza

How To Start Writing - Exercises and Prompts to Massage Your Imagination

Some would say that it's the hardest part of the whole affair. How to actually put pen to paper and begin somewhere - to take the first step in a long walk. It *is* difficult but it doesn't have to be and something that I've learned from my time at university is that ultimately it's up to you to put your foot on the accelerator.

What can prove useful is taking writing exercises just to get you started. Here are some of my favourites.

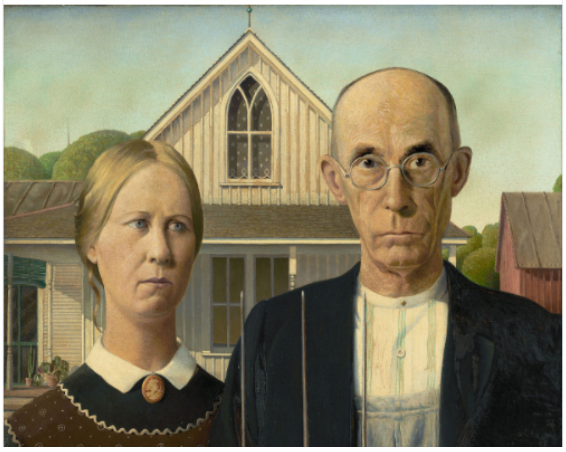
1. "I Remember..."

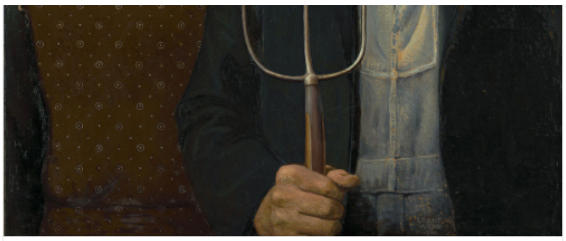
This is a timed one and I recommend giving yourself fifteen minutes but you can go as high as thirty if I you feel you need it. Essentially, you picture a place or a time in your personal life - it could be just a particular season or a year or even your whole childhood - and start every sentence with "I remember" just to see what comes to mind. What is important to remember is that a lot of writing is based on personal experience whether we like it or not and tackling your own upbringing artistically could bring the best out of you.

The important caveat about this writing exercise is to not stop if you can help it. Write on impulse. Whatever comes to mind about say, when you were fourteen years old, get it written down. You never know which direction you could end up going in. You may be telling yourself that your life isn't that interesting but you'd be surprised what you can recall and the poetry that comes with it. Think about the senses, thoughts and feelings that would be going through your mind at the time.

This exercise is for testing your descriptive ability.

2. Photo/Music/Object Prompts.





Grant Wood - "American Gothic"

This one is pretty free-form. Look at any image - preferably a painting - of landscaped scenery or of abstract art and see what comes to mind. You may think it's simple, too easy or even limiting but the point about utilizing visual prompts is that you can always fall back on them. The best ideas are always happened upon accidentally. You may find that your mind is exploring a facet of life previously uncharted in your brain.

My favourite kind of prompt - music - can be incredibly provocative. This is especially true if it's a genre or category of music that you aren't necessarily familiar with. Whatever your preferred way of streaming music is, look through genre mixes, radios or playlists of stuff that you're maybe only vaguely familiar with and just let it play. Close your eyes. Picture the music. Picture the story it's telling. Put yourself in a new world.

You could even take a physical object and study it for a while. Think of a story for it. It might be a weird esoteric knick-knack or a statue that your mother has hung on to for 45 years for no good reason. What do you feel when you look at it? What goes through your mind? Where could it come from? You could even go to a place near you and engage that same creative mindset.

The possibilities are literally endless.

3. One-Word Prompts.

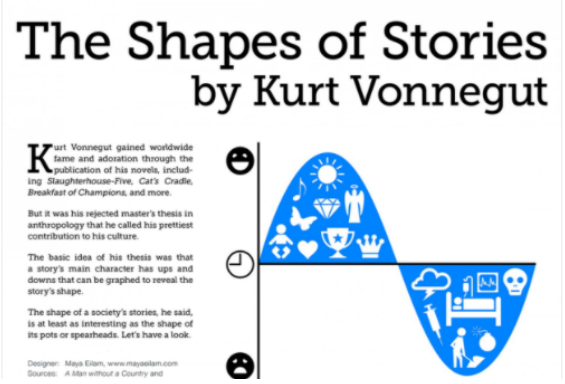
Specifically, limit yourself and see what comes out. For example, you have to start a one-page short story that starts with the sentence "The trees were made of gold". Have a couple of attempts and see what happens. There are websites, Twitter accounts and probably even Tumblrs that generate prompts and challenges.

You could decide to write a short story with a certain title like a single word. Base the entire story around that word. This, of course, all counts for poetry or even if you're doing a diary or a journal entry. The primary function is to get your mind thinking unilaterally about writing and how you approach it. Make something out of what is supposedly nothing.

4. Short As Possible (The Shape of Stories by Kurt Vonnegut)

This is more of an editing exercise and a practice in story-structuring. Take a pre-existing story, either one you have written or one by someone else, and make it as short as possible. Cut it down to the absolute basics and by doing this, you excavate the bones. You know what is important and what isn't. In a way, it's like planning posthumously.

To help me explain this, I'm going to use a favourite of mine: Kurt Vonnegut's *The Shape of Stories*


The Shapes of Stories
by Kurt Vonnegut
Kurt Vonnegut gained worldwide fame and adoration through the publication of his novels, including Slaughterhouse-Five, Cat's Cradle, Breakfast of Champions, and more.
But it was his rejected master's thesis in anthropology that he called his prettiest contribution to his culture.
The basic idea of his thesis was that a story's main character has ups and downs that can be graphed to reveal the story's shape.
The shape of a society's stories, he said, is at least as interesting as the shape of its pots or spearheads. Let's have a look.
Designer: Maya Eilam, www.mayaeilam.com
Sources: A Man without a Country and

Palm Sunday by Kurt Vonnegut
Man in Hole
The main character gets into trouble then gets out of it again and ends up better off for the experience.
Arsenic and Old Lace
Harold & Kumar Go To White Castle
Boy Meets Girl
The main character comes across something wonderful, gets it, loses it, then gets it back forever.
Jane Eyre
Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind
From Bad to Worse
The main character starts off poorly then gets continually worse with no hope for improvement.
The Metamorphosis
The Twilight Zone
Which Way Is Up?
The story has a lifelike ambiguity that keeps us from knowing if new developments are good or bad.
Hamlet
The Sopranos
Creation Story
In many cultures' creation stories, humankind receives incremental gifts from a deity. First major staples like the earth and sky, then smaller things like sparrows and cell phones. Not a common shape for Western stories, however.
Old Testament
Humankind receives incremental gifts from a deity, but is suddenly ousted from good standing in a fall of enormous proportions.
Great Expectations
New Testament
Humankind receives incremental gifts from a deity, is suddenly ousted from good standing, but then receives off-the-charts bliss.
Great Expectations with Dickens' alternate ending
Cinderella
It was the similarity between the shapes of Cinderella and the New Testament that thrilled Vonnegut for the first time in 1947 and then over the course of his life as he continued to write essays and give lectures on the shapes of stories.

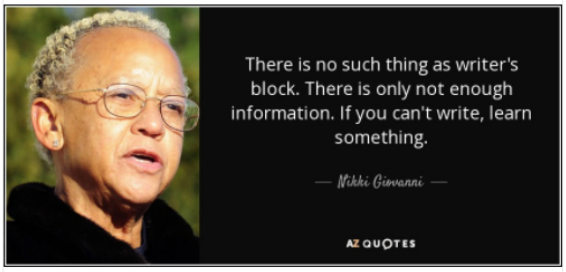
Image Courtesy of OpenCulture.com

Vonnegut uses a chart system to explain how certain stories are shaped based around the fortunes of the protagonist. Higher on the wavelength equals better fortunes and lower equals worse and he points out that contrary to the proverb, things often get better before they get worse. But other *types* of stories follow different patterns with different events marked on each peak and trough to underline the great shape that stories all take. When you understand this, you are able to know the important events, why they happen and when they happen.

The point of this is to get a handle on what direction you're going in your story when you cut everything down to basics. When you know what events are the important ones and what they do for your story, it can do wonders for your long term ability to draft a story.

…If that makes sense.

5. Don't Write If You Don't Feel Like It


There is no such thing as writer's block. There is only not enough information. If you can't write, learn something.
— Nikki Giovanni —
AZ QUOTES

This one is going to blow your mind.

If you're sitting there, staring bare-faced at the paper with nothing coming out, banging the keyboard with frustration, I'll illuminate you. Just stop.

Get up and turn away from the keyboard. Close the lid or shut the notebook. Put your work away and go and do something else with your time. Distract yourself. Watch a new TV show or a film. Go out for a walk. Read a book. Do anything else because one thing that you aren't going to do in those moments of fierce writer's block is write. Allow yourself a break and put your mind at rest for a bit because when you come back, you'll be more ready to tackle your work. It's an exercise because it's a psychological difficulty to give yourself a break if you're a creative individual. Time always hangs heavy on your hands but only if you let it.

"There is no such thing as "Writer's Block", only impatience"

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How You Learn How to Write

They say that you can't teach writing and they're probably right. What I believe is that there are definitely ways to get better and improve your craft. Certain things are absolutely necessary to progress and improve as a writer - no matter what the skill level is.

I've got a few things here and there that aren't trade secrets but more good advice for moving forward with your writing.

1. Put Pen to Paper.

You don't know what you're like at writing if you don't try at least once. The important thing about giving it a go is that if you won't know where to start if you don't start at all. You may think that you're terrible at writing or that you're God's gift to the medium but you have to produce something - and I mean anything - to get started. Think of it as taking a preliminary test for a college to get a handle on your skill level. See my blog about writing exercises if you need any help. :)

2. Get Help (and Allow Yourself to Be Helped).

It seems incredibly obvious considering what the subject of this article is but what is fundamental to learning the art of writing is that you have to know how to get help, where to get help from and how to apply it to your work. What I should point out at this juncture is that **you should never hand out money to people who are offering to read your work**. Most literary agents would happily read your work for free.

But it doesn't have to be a literary agent. Just get someone who you trust to tell you the truth and be honest. Preferably, get a reader to critique your work like they would for a book from a bookshop. The more important aspect is psychological. You have to learn how to take criticism on the chin and not take it personally. Understand that whoever is giving you constructive critcism has your best interests in mind. What is constructive criticism? Simple. The want for your work to be ***more effective*** and when that want ***is asked for***. Not unprompted put-downs in preference of what the critic wants.

Be prepared to take the advice and make the changes to your work. You may see it as a damage to your work and you may even not end up with that in your final edit but cycling through the chunks of info will help you find your way - what is good and what isn't.

3. Read.

I'll keep putting it in writing articles until I'm blue in the face but you have to read. If not read, take in any media - painted art, television, cinema, music - and think about it creatively; how was it put together and how it works as a piece of media. Take in the story, the composition, the structure, the dialogue and the syntax. **What you learned in English Literature at school is useful in these scenarios because of the problem-solving skills it teaches you**. When you understand what makes something quintessentially good. What, exactly, absorbs you in the product?

When you know the answer, it will make you a better writer. Think about art like a philosopher thinks about life or how a psychologist thinks about the mind.

4. Make Use of Your Notebook (or memo app on your phone).

Plan. Write down story ideas (they won't stay in your head forever). Keep tabs on your progress and if someone tells you helpful advice or if you read a pertinent quote online, write it down. Be economical and try not to fill your notebook with random circled words out of context or underlined dates for no reason. **It isn't enough to just cosplay as a writer** because you actually have to be one if you want to be good at it. This piece of advice is only small but it's practical and a good notebook can put in the hard yards to make you work-hours more efficient in the long run.

5. Engage Your Imagination.

The word *learning* might sound tedious to you because it probably reminds you of a time in your life where you were depressed, bored, lost or just generally having a bad time of it. The truth is though that the best writers at the top of their game with nothing left to prove are still learning. **You have to think about the process of writing without an academic mindset so you get the best out of yourself.**

I did go to university and it must be said that it didn't necessarily teach me how to write but taught me how to be better. I didn't take a fancy to writing in school because they don't really teach it and the subject of "creative writing" isn't defined by 2+2. It's closer to crafting a sum with two numbers you've invented yourself. I may be rambling but my point is this: **engaging your imagination is learning how to write.**

6. Read Your Own Work Aloud to Yourself.

This is very hard. It's difficult but very, very necessary. You have to read what you've written out loud to yourself so you can see how it sounds. See if you're out of breath at the end of sentences and if full-stops (periods) and commas are in the places that they should be. You have to believe me when I say that reading in your head is a completely different sensation.

You'll even discover certain adjectives and nouns don't roll of the tongue the way you think they do in your head. There is a certain beat and rhythm to writing that you won't discover without properly dictating it out loud. As a little bonus, you could unearth grammar and spelling mistakes dotted around here and there. That brings me on to my next and final point.

7. Master The Basics.

Okay, this is the only hard-nosed point that I have to make so I left it at the end.

This isn't even something that you need a degree for. You just have to know how to use Google and utilize it for incredibly accessible knowledge about language and how it is constructed. Grammar, punctuation, sentence structure - all that really boring stuff that you learned really early on. If you didn't pursue the subject of English Language (or the respective national language class in your country) in further education because of whatever reason, **you will lose that basic knowledge.**

If you use a word and you ask yourself what it means and your brain doesn't have a proper answer, look it up. Always double-check that a word means exactly what you think it means. You can't just guess or go from memory unless you are positively sure. Don't allow yourself to be caught out and, by using Google more and more, it will stick in your head. For example, I used the word *quintessentially* in this article earlier. I looked up both what it means and how to spell it. I was 95% sure but that isn't enough. If you don't know where the apostrophe goes in a sentence, I am begging you to look it up. There is no shame in not knowing and using a search engine takes ten seconds max.

If you master the basics, even your writing isn't all that much to write home about, it will look professionally put together. You'd be surprised how many mistakes you read online and you don't even know it is a mistake. I have made mistakes that have been easily avoidable had I just looked it up.

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392 notes

The Cheat Codes for Being a Fiction Writer (Some Of Them)

I've recently finished my Master's course for Creative Writing. In fact, I handed in my dissertation at the start of the month, sealing off the educational period of my life possibly for good. I can't say I learned a *lot* about being a writer but what I will say is that you pick up a great deal of extremely useful tidbits. The artistic university experience is food for thought and not sustenance for the starved. You'll be plodding along for a few weeks and thinking that what you're doing is a waste of time and then, suddenly, you'll be presented with something that could massage your brains in a way that you weren't expecting. It might be an experimental poem with a bizarre format or it could be an entirely new form of writing that you'd never heard of before.

Casper David Friedrich - "The Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog"

The one thing you won't find at university (***from my experience***) is how to actually do the writing bit. There is a lot of debate about whether or not you can even teach it as a subject at all which is an argument you'll probably never hear the end of. I certainly won't be able to teach you either but, like music theory, there's some pathways to the craft that open your brain a lot more to the process.

1. Less is More.

Sounds like a pretty old adage but it's one of the most useful attitudes when it comes to what is called a "writing economy". You have to be economical. Any artist in any avenue will sympathize with the compulsion to always add more to a piece of work when **you should be taking more out**. If you can get the same feelings out in less words, than do so. One of Matt Groening's directing philosophies behind *The Simpsons* is being as funny as possible in as little words as possible - even if that means no words at all.

Obviously, there's a limit to this philosophy that you'll quickly get to grips with. It's like changing gears in a car. You have to know when is the write time for what. Read it out to yourself. Is it too long? Are you

running out of breath before the end of the sentence? The economy and quickness is also relative to the mood of the piece.

2. *"Places need you to go to them"*

Credit: u/dienaked

Setting can be easy to overlook if the centrepoint of whatever you're writing about *isn't* the setting. The place exists in your head but you need to let the reader go there and feel what you feel. Use the senses. Think about the possible small fixtures of the room and what they would add if you let the reader in. Like the last point, there isn't a need to be meticulous because **you have to allow the reader's imagination to imagine.**

If you're thinking about an entire town, my go-to would be Derry in Stephen King's *IT*. As you can see from the fanart (u/dienaked on r/stephenking) is that the world is so richly drawn that one is able to produce a map like this at all. I would recommend the book and the latest movie to take notes on how Stephen King makes more than just a backdrop.

3. Understand You'll Make Mistakes.

An important lesson about making art is that failure is part of the process. Whilst I include the grim acceptance that you don't have the Midas touch, I specifically mean that it takes a while to get it right. I forget about the first two points sometimes and get swept up in the hotbed of my own brain. It's easily done. It actually took a few years of me being told those two things to fully get my head around what they properly mean.

I've probably made some mistakes in this very post.

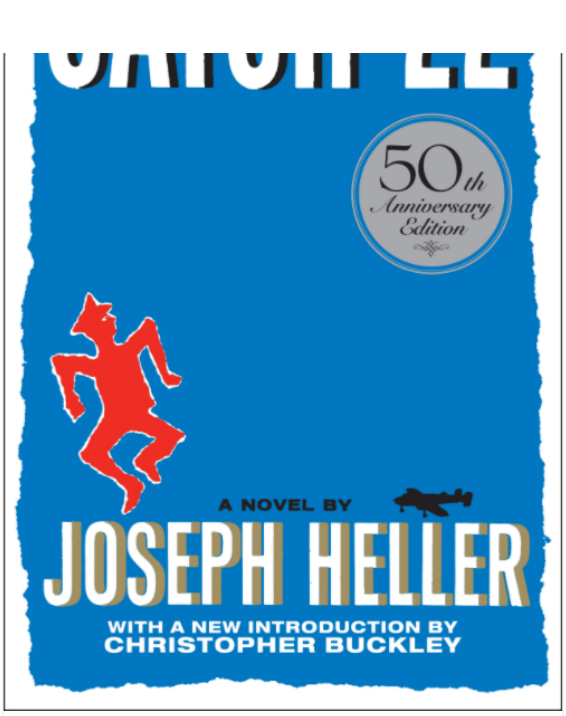
You aren't God's gift to the medium; without fault and above judgement. I'll pack into this point that it **does help to get your work read by someone who will be honest with you**. It **doesn't have to be a writing professional but someone who reads a moderate amount**. Ask them for specific things you want feedback on like story, structure, form and themes.

4. Be Obsessed With Your Characters.

You have time. You don't have to but it does help to get to know your characters as much as you can. What is their favourite food? Where were they born? What was their childhood like? It helps because it makes dialogue a whole lot easier to write and how they behave come off a lot more natural in your writing. You won't find yourself arriving at a point where you would be asking yourself: What would they be like in this situation? How would they react?

I say again that **you don't have to do this if you don't want to**. It is especially useful if **you're constructing a fantasy or sci-fi world or any kind of series.**

5. You Actually Have to Read Books.



Joseph Heller - Catch 22

Yes. I'm sorry but you could really do with reading books fairly regularly. You can't really get away with not doing it. I thought for the longest time that the books that I had read up to my point in university would be enough to carry me because I'm incredibly influenced by all of them. You get it into your head that you'll be compared to all the great writers as unfavourably as possible but it just isn't true.

I have even said to myself that I'll just end up subconsciously "copying" whatever I've read which isn't really true either. Essentially, if you're a creative person, anything you will ever do will have some connection to something that you've absorbed previously. You can tell yourself that isn't the case or come up with any excuse not to read. But you really should. Just pick up a book before bed and do half an hour, twenty minutes.

This is all aside from the other obvious benefits of reading.

6. Each Chapter is a Short Story.

Taking this philosophy in your structure will make writing a novel a whole lot easier. Plan out each chapter like a short story. Work out what the conclusion is and what will be the crux of the chapter. It will ease you into the habit of planning generally because **you have to plan to some extent**.

You'll also find from taking this advice, you'll be taking the entire process one step at a time and it could help those who feel bogged down by a project.

7. Be Ruthless.

The editing process is nearly more than half the writing process and you have to be ruthless with what you cut out. There will be times where you come up with something incredible. Your brain will come up with the goods unexpectedly but you have to pause for a moment and question if it really works with what you're aiming for. If it isn't then you have to be brave enough to delete it. Nothing stopping you

from saving it for later though.

"When your story is ready for rewrite, cut it to the bone. Get rid of every ounce of excess fat. This is going to hurt; revising a story down to the bare essentials is always a little like murdering children, but it must be done." —Stephen King

This also counts for any of the building blocks in your story. If something doesn't work, you have to be prepared for the possibility of scrapping the lot. **You can afford to let the cards collapse.**

8. Do What You Like

This is the best one. The greatest thing about being an artist is that you can do what you like and go about it however you want. You are in control of your process and there are so many different methods to get your engine running. I implore that you experiment with all the incentives and prompts that you'll easily find on the internet for free. Try stuff out and see what works. Personally, my favourite thing to do whilst writing is listening to music or ambience. There are thousands of playlists on Spotify that are specifically *for* writing/studying/whatever so why not give that a bash. On YouTube, you will not be able to get enough of 10-hour ambient noises that folk have made.

There will be always something that suits your mood and way of working. You just have to find it. Read how other writers go about their process because it won't be a secret.

My final tip would be that **you're always learning all the time**. I'm still learning how to do this Tumblr thing and how to put these kinds of articles together. Your job is to allow the information that you're taking in to stick to you and put it to use.

Some Books I Would Recommend:

Jeff Vandermeer - *Wonderbook*

Stephen King - *On Writing*

Joseph Heller - *Catch 22*

Kurt Vonnegut - *Slaughterhouse Five*

Khaled Hosseini - *The Kite Runner*

#creative writing #writing #writing lifehacks #lifehacks #fiction writing #fiction writing tips #writing help #literature #english lit #english literatur #writing at university #studying #studying writing #amwriting

183 notes

How Bo Burnham's INSIDE Improved My Creative Approach

It feels like it has been a very long time since something has came about that has been so universally acclaimed and it has grown on me more and more since my first viewing. At the time of writing this, I have seen it four times.

It's funny because my initial praise seemed fairly pedestrian in that I enjoyed it because it struck the comfy place between base-level silliness and excavated deeper meaning. You can still enjoy this work of art if you take it for what it is but the iceberg is there if you want to take a deep dive underwater which is precisely what you want out of any art. But there, I've praised *INSIDE* for essentially being

extremely competent at visual storytelling and thematic resonance as opposed to telling what those themes and story are. How themes of living with anxiety and depression, the blurred lines between the creative self and the human underneath the skin and aspects of self-awareness.

It also couldn't have released at a better time or in a better way. It wasn't hastily knocked together in prime pandemic hour when every production company was scrambling for some COVID-19 related media. It isn't really about the pandemic either and I feel like he could've made this whenever and it would still touch and relate to people like it has. It's just even more relatable to a lot more people. Personally, I think it's a bit of a mistake to put this out in cinemas because it obviously isn't crafted for a crowd of people. I feel like being in a massive theater full of other people would detract from the claustrophobic experience of watching it.

I can go on and on about how brilliant *INSIDE* was at achieving all this and more but I want to talk about the infectious creativity behind Burnham's latest song-and-dance.

The term 'home-made' is synonymous with low-effort. Not anymore. Sure, it's obvious that Bo Burnham's equipment wasn't bought in an alleyway and that it is bound to have cost an arm and a leg. But the point is that it could've been made with electronic equipment that Burnham found at the back of his shed and it still would've went down just as well. The power was in his all in his hands to make something exceptionally good and be in complete control of the output which is an abject rarity in this world. So he made what he wanted and had to answer to nobody - on paper anyway.

As an aside, something that I found frustrating was that everyone and their dog was trying to get ahold of him for an interview about it or a podcast or whatever when, I really don't want to know behind the scenes or the thought process. It's not something we should want to know. It would be like asking Salvador Dali what he was thinking when he turned the urinal on it's side and signed it with a fake name. That may sound a little pretentious but it's true that once he tells you, some of the magic has gone. You should want the magician to baffle you.

Anyway, it's clear Bo Burnham is writing about himself whilst simultaneously expressing a self-consciousness about how he is percieved by himself versus the perception of others. This is especially present in the reaction scene where Bo Burnham reacts to himself reacting to himself reacting to himself reacting to his song *Unpaid Intern*. The end result of him writing about himself is fantastically earnest and thought-provoking despite the groundwork being very small.

It's something you appreciate as a viewer when you're watching it because it's not *like* you are being let inside someone's thoughts and feelings, you *are* being let inside someone's thoughts and feelings. He has used the concept of being by oneself to think about oneself conceptually. That is perhaps what I admire most about *INSIDE* because it's a special, secret slice of Bo Burnham. Personally, I'm self-conscious that I'm scrubbing myself and who I am over everything I do when it isn't entirely necessary or that I'm tricking myself into thinking people are interested. No-one looks at *INSIDE* and thinks that Burnham is being narcisstic or self-absorbant.

Of course, it isn't a new thing that an artist has put a piece of themself into something that they've made but it's rare that someone has done it *this way*.

Conceptually, Burnham has created something unique that does defy the laws of what movies should be. I don't know if you've noticed but if you've ever tried to recommend this to someone else, you struggle to describe what it even is because, unlike the fucking boring *Death Stranding*, it actually has invented a new genre. If there is one thing I hate in craft, it's ***rules***. Bo has given me something to aim for in that respect.

If anything, *INSIDE* has given me a kick up the arse. Aside from inspiring me to put myself in my work and take my own control of it, it could inspire a whole new wave of young film-makers. Hopefully, it's given TV and cinema executives a kick as well that it might not be such a bad idea to give the artist complete control over whatever they want to make. ***Hopefully***.

#bo burnham #inside #burnham #bo burnham inside #inside review #inside analysis #bo burnham review #bo burnham analysis #homemade #homemade cinema

10 notes

hokkyokuro

hokkyokuro

Writing mistakes that editors will call you out for!

Disclaimer: *this is a harsh and mean informative post on mistakes that make your writing amateurish or fanfiction-like. In the professional world, editors will call you out on them in a much harsher way that here.. but hey, they're easy to fix! Of course, the quality of writing is often a matter of individual taste and experience, though there is a theory to it and ways to make your work clear and interesting to your readers.*

> And yes, as cruel as it sounds to admit—most fanfiction writers are amateurs who will not help you improve your own writing. You might have to close your Good Omens AO3 fanfic for a few hours to read the actual work by Neil Gaiman. That said, fanfiction is an amazing gateway to becoming a pro author because it gives you insight on what the audience likes, and the practice you need to improve! There are many fanfiction writers who've taken the time to learn from professionals about their craft, and are in a place where they could become successful published authors themselves.

That aside, here are 7 writing mistakes that hinder your writing!

1 – Dialogue tags

This is BY FAR the most common mistake that amateur writers do

This is BY FAR the most common mistake that amateur writers do, and particularly prelevant in fanfiction. Alternative dialogue tags (whisper, shout, murmured) should be used VERY sparingly. "said", "replied", and "asked" should build up the majority of the tags you use.

Oftentimes, the reader will understand the tone based on what the character says or by their actions.

2 - Tense changes

Pick a tense and stick to it. Many times, amateurs waver between past and present which leads to awkward reading. Choose which tense you prefer and stick to it. An extra caution should be taken when using past tense, however, to correctly use past preterite (I ate) vs past perfect (I had eaten). While both can be used, they are different so make sure you understand when to use which.

3 – Pointless dialogue

It's time to cut the small talk. While chitchat and banter may be fun to read, particularly in fanfiction, editors will ask that you remove it if it doesn't advance the plot. What you want to do is cut down on the filler in your story, and if that means your characters NOT having an argument about macaroni cheese, then so be it. Save dialogue for important and meaningful conversation only—your readers will prefer it, I promise.

4 – Pointless description

Hand in hand with the previous point, description should be kept consise and relevant. We don't need to know what your character is wearing or the details of their "black, leather, zebra-print sofa under the wide windowsill in the master bedroom". Keep the descriptions short, fed into the plot little-by-little and relevant to what is happening. Your readers are smart—they can imagine the rest for themselves! That's what makes reading fun!

5 – Use the character's name

The blue-eyed boy has a name for the great purpose of you using it! Literal writing, nine times out of ten, is better! Green orbs are distracting, but green eyes are to the point and clear. It's the same with names! The name, title, role (butler, governess etc), or pronouns should always be the default. Any other term should be used sparingly when there is no other alternative.

6 – Abandon the pet names

Yes, pet names are cute and fun, but not when they're in every sentence of conversation. Things like "babe", "baby", "sugarpuff sunshine fairy" should be used SPARINGLY. I can assure you, the love interests saying it once or twice in the novel will have a far greater impact on the reader than if they say it every time they call their partner. An overuse of pet names becomes distracting and make the character seem both immature and a caricature. It also has a similar effet to repeating the other person's name during a conversation—it leads to unnatural dialogue as we only really say the other person's name to them in order to get their attention.

7 – Immature characters

This is a biiiiig one in fanfiction. You may see characters who are adults in their mid to late twenties but who still behave like teenagers. Granted, if you are a teenage writer, this can't always be corrected, though it does become apparent to any reader over the age of eighteen.

Truth be told, adults mature and don't react as overtly as many poorly-written characters do. A twenty-eight year old is very unlikely to tell two teenagers who are making out at the kitchen table to "get a room", nor are they likely to be victim of some horrible miscommunication that leads to a lovers-to-enemies-to-lovers situation. Of course, it is still possible, though it does read as unrealistic and makes it apparent that the author has not yet reached the age of the character they are writing about. Take reference from real people around the age of your characters and if all else fails, you could always look for the possibility to age them down.

> The point of correcting these mistakes is to create a novel that is easy to understand without the reader feeling as though they're swimming through mud. Publishers look for clear, consise books that tell one story from start to finish!

Good luck!

2,020 notes

Bisexual

It's something that I've been dealing with since my teens not in a hyper-spiritual way or in a deeply troubled way but simply if I *"qualified"* or not. When questioning myself, I looked at gay and bisexual people who I knew and didn't see myself as one of them.

Anyone who has known me personally will know that I often changed my answer. Sometimes I might've said that "I thought about it and decided that men were gross" which was true. I do tend to think that men are generally gross and I frequently find that I am deeply unattracted to a large portion of them but that's besides the point. You are bought up to believe that being bisexual must mean that you are attracted to absolutely everybody or that the attraction levels are at least split straight down the middle - whatever that means.

From time to time, odd things would happen conversationally where I would have cause to question why I view the world slightly differently compared to other straight men that I knew. Things that go beyond your bog-standard man who wants to stay as far as possible away from his sexuality. I found that I was pretty comfortable with talking about men who I found attractive because I thought you can admit that without sacrficing the all-precious sanctity of heterosexuality. Again, I was bought up to assume that it meant 50/50. I would have a self-aware moment where I would ask myself: "Why am I so eager to know this sort of thing?" I wouldn't know the answer. There would be this cognitive dissonance where I would dismiss thoughts and ideas because they couldn't be true - I'm a straight man.

It's probably because I subconsciously sought the social normalization of bisexual discussion. Inertly, I must've thought this was normal. It's funny because me posting this is going to be a huge surprise. I've literally told no-one that I'm going to do this because perhaps, I want to force that social normalization by hook or by crook. To me, it isn't a big deal but it feels like I'm wrapping something up now. I'm bisexual. I just am.

What Contributes to Bi+ Erasure?
Mislabeling bi+ people as lesbian, gay, or straight, even when they come out as bi+
Denying that bi+ people exist
Calling bi+ people "allies"
Using non-inclusive language like "gay marriage," for example, even when there are out bi+ people getting married
Assuming a person is lesbian, gay, or straight depending on the gender(s) of their partner(s)
BHAM

What's been most illuminating and has stuck in the back of my mind ever since I read it on social media is that LGBTQIA+ people often find that they have to prove their sexuality or gender identity on a practical level or they aren't believed or validated by some. I, and many other bisexual men, may never ever enter an all-male relationship. It doesn't mean anything. It doesn't go both ways either; heterosexual people are never questioned on their heterosexuality. Thinking about this has been a game changer.

This is what biphobia sounds like:
THE EQUALITY INSTITUTE
I didn't think you were bi anymore - you're in a hetero relationship?
People who are bisexual are just attention-seekers
Men who say they're bisexual are just too scared to come out as gay.
Don't date someone who's bi, they'll only cheat on you! They're attracted to everyone.
It's just a phase, you'll make up your mind when you meet the right man.

The last thing I want is a big fuss and I suspect that is something that puts people off coming out. I don't think that I'm going to get booted out my house for this but I absolutely do expect that they will bore the bollocks off me with embarrassing watercooler chitchat for the next six months. I have not suffered in denial or in persecution. Nothing at all has actually changed other than that I will fill in forms slightly differently.

Once I hit that little blue button on the bottom right corner that says "Queue", I probably won't be able to sleep tonight and I will be constantly thinking about deleting this from my drafts because I'm not ready yet or that I'm still unsure.. I'm even thinking about hitting backspace on all of it as I type this sentence. I want to talk myself out of it. If nothing else, all these feelings prove it and verify it for myself.

So fuck it.

#bi #bisexuality #lgbt #lgbtq #lgbtqia #coming out #coming out stories #coming out story #bisexual

10 notes

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